

## Waukesha County Humane Officer's Corner by Jill Posanski

### Humane Program Annual Wrap-up for 2010:

The Humane Animal Program at Waukesha County tallies up the number of animal bites and humane animal complaints that we respond to each year. With Dog Bite Prevention week and Be Kind to Animals week coming up, I thought the Tattle Tails readers might be interested in seeing our 2010 year-end information on bites, complaints and humane education presentations.

In 2010, the Waukesha County Humane Program received and responded to 586 animal bite reports and potential rabies exposures. With the theme of this newsletter on "making good choices", please realize that with 586 bite reports, I listened to 586 stories of how folks were bitten. My brilliant conclusion is that at times, people are not making good choices around pets. Some bite victims admit they did a "stupid thing" and "got bit". The biggest Oops leading to bites this year were unsupervised children, adults getting in the middle of a dogfight and folks trying to pry food or a toy out of an excited dog's mouth.

Most of the animals involved in bite cases were kept at home for the required 10-day quarantine period. The rabies quarantine period is in place to ensure the victim's health, not as some bossy, governmental power trip. Rabies vaccines can fail. My example is kids receiving the chicken pox vaccine-and some still come down with chicken pox. That is the reasoning behind quarantining even currently vaccinated animals. Pets with overdue rabies shots have to be quarantined away from home. Make a "good choice" and keep pet vaccinations up to date. Fido would rather chill at home if he has to be quarantined.

My office sent 122 rabies-suspect specimens sent to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. We received one positive and five inconclusive rabies results. Humane officers followed up with all the people potentially exposed to rabies, and encouraged them to contact their physicians with medical questions.

The Waukesha County humane office received 181 significant complaints regarding animals during 2010. The most common complaint was for dogs tied out without access to shelter. We continue to get a lot of calls concerning nuisance barking and dogs/cats running at large. Both of those problems are handled by local law enforcement. The barking is a noise violation and dog-at-large is an animal control issue. The police can request humane officer involvement if they discover animal neglect during their investigation.

The humane program conducts educational classes as part of our outreach. In 2010, 36 classes were presented, with 1265 people attending. Most classes were given to school-age children, while attending Kids and Critters camp at HAWS. Veterinary clinics and police departments hosted our programs on handling bite cases, to educate their staff.

And there you have it, a whole year on the job with a humane officer compressed into statistics.

Stay Safe and Train Positively! Jill